



## Lake Albemarle 2005



Lake Albemarle is 35-acre impoundment built in 1938 by the Civilian Conservation Corp. It was one of the first public lakes in the Charlottesville-Albemarle County area. Before filling, 15 log cribs were constructed in the lake basin to act as spawning areas for bass and cover for catfish. These cribs still exist after more than 60 years and are great places to find fish. Additional attractors consisting of old tires and cedar tress have been constructed over the last 20 years. Only one attractor, near the boat ramp, is currently marked. It consists of the steel framework of an old diving platform that has been enhanced with recycled Christmas trees and piles of cinder block. No gasoline motors are permitted at Lake Albemarle.

The Department of Game & Inland Fisheries owns and manages Lake Albemarle. Historically, a variety of species were stocked, but only channel catfish survived in enough numbers to justify continued stocking. All other species now found in the lake sustain their populations through natural reproduction. These include largemouth bass, bluegill, redear sunfish, black crappie, and warmouth (a species of sunfish).

Fish populations in the lake are managed to provide the best possible angling for all of the major sport species. Sampling using an electrofishing boat is conducted every 3 or 4 years to evaluate the status of the fish populations. If necessary, the fisheries biologist may then recommend regulation or stocking changes.

In 2004, Lake Albemarle contained excellent numbers of sport fish. Electrofishing catch rates for largemouth bass and bluegill were, by far, the highest on record. Although the overall number of bass was excellent, the size structure of this population was on the small side. Very few bass exceeded 15 inches and growth rates were relatively slow. This indicates that the bass population needs to be thinned somewhat to promote faster growth. As a result, removal of the 15-18-inch slot limit is under consideration.

The panfish populations were outstanding in 2004. Bluegill exhibited very good growth rates, and there were excellent numbers of 7.5-8-inch fish available to anglers. Black crappie up to 12 inches and redear sunfish and warmouth up to 9 inches were collected too. The fish structures in the lake provide great places to catch a bunch of these delectable panfish. You might catch one of the stocked channel catfish too.

This lake should continue to provide excellent angling opportunities. Plans are currently being drawn up to replace the courtesy pier at the boat ramp with a much larger and more suitable structure. We will continue to periodically monitor the lake's fish populations and maintain the fish attractors as necessary.